

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: March 11, 2021 8:00 AM

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COMMENTS FOR: The Committee will hear invited testimony on elections.

Lucas Neville, Mx.

Self

Crowley, TX

As a Disabled Texan with a Rare Disease who is unable - even with mRNA - to create antibodies to any infection, I have found the TXLEGE attempts to discourage curbside, mail-in, ballot correction notifications all attempts to suppress my vote. Prior to COVID19, I lived a careful life avoiding crowds, avoiding malls, rarely dining in, and once the pandemic hit, the Republican Party begins to attack my right to vote. As a privileged white male who owns property and in the backwards thinking "originalist" voting ideas, the feckless white Republicans are acting against "their very own." Who are these privileged whites who seek to undermine the white vote? Are they wanting to lose?

Curbside and mail-in voting are not problems. These attempts at white voter suppression are alarming therefore, even more alarming is how utterly foolish these Republicans look to minority groups! Republicans will never seek to allow ALL Eligible Texans to vote because of the fear of losing the neighbor. They claim their god is almighty and yet they act like their god is tiny and small, very much like the Republican mindset. If your god is so good, then leave your god out of your politics and maybe just do the right thing and stop oppressing the margins. Dan Patrick lies when he thinks mail-in voting is problematic, he's saying that the military does not know what they are doing! Mail-in voting had occurred since WWI, is Dan saying it's FUBAR'ed back his daddy voted yes to the 1965 CRA? And back when his granddaddy fought so his wife could vote? Republicans want power. Caesar Augustus wanted power. There is no difference in this failing Empire, the elites cling to that which is not theirs.

If the Republicans want to continue down this Putin/Hitlerish oppression path, it is my hope that the people rise up and dismantle their power grab. Everyone should have the right to vote at age 18, by mail, by curbside, or by pulling the proverbial lever. Suppression tactics will destroy the State and it shows who is actually going to serve us versus who wants to suck the coffers dry while they rail against those who elected them. I support curbside voting, mail in voting, automatic voter registration, and I support any party not Republican who recognizes that government serves the people and does not try to rule the people.

Sandra Kelly

self

Denton, TX

Democracy is served by increased participation voters, not restricted legislation and access. 1. Expand mail in voting to all - no restrictions. Many need to vote by mail but do not fit within the restrictions currently set out by the state of Texas. This is discriminatory. 2. Expand early voting days / times and help to fund them. Work schedules, child care, illnesses, any number of circumstances can affect ability to vote on certain dates and times. Long lines are unacceptable and are an undue burden. Voting should not be made more difficult. 3. Expand the number of polling locations. Texas has less than 750 polling locations since 2012 despite the increase in eligible voters. This is unacceptable. Increase polling locations and assist with funding. 4. INCREASE drop off locations for mail in ballots. What happened in Nov of 2020 was a travesty and looks very much like an attempt to disenfranchise voters. 5. Increase access to voter registration including automatic registration with drivers license. Voter fraud is virtually nonexistent and is an excuse to limit access. If voter fraud were an issue - then line it out. Dates, times, numbers, incident. Put out a bullet point document of instances of voter fraud in Texas - bullet points being date, time # of votes affected, party affiliation, etc. Continuing to speak of voter fraud in vague generalizations with no facts or details is again, unacceptable. Do the right thing for Texas. Stop restrictive actions.

Ronald Shenberger

I represent myself only in this correspondence

Denton, TX

I request that this committee include as much of the "For the People Act of 2021" in the proposed election legislation. This action would mitigate the argument that federal legislation is interfering with Texas state's rights.

A bill such as this one addresses voter access, election integrity and security, campaign finance, and ethics for the three branches of government.

Specifically, the bill expands voter registration (e.g., automatic and same-day registration) and voting access (e.g., vote-by-mail and early voting). It also limits removing voters from voter rolls.

The bill requires the establishment of an independent redistricting commission to carry out congressional and state redistricting.

Additionally, the bill sets forth provisions related to election security, including sharing intelligence information with state election officials, supporting in securing their election systems, developing a national strategy to protect U.S. democratic institutions, establishing in the legislative branch the State Commission to Protect Democratic Institutions, and other provisions to improve the cybersecurity of election systems.

Further, the bill addresses campaign finance, including expanding the prohibition on campaign spending by foreign nationals, requiring additional disclosure of campaign-related fundraising and spending, requiring additional disclaimers regarding certain political advertising, and establishing an alternative campaign funding system for certain state offices.

The bill addresses ethics in all three branches of government, including by requiring a code of conduct for Supreme Court Justices, prohibiting Members of the legislature from serving on the board of a for-profit entity, and establishing additional conflict-of-interest and ethics provisions for state employees and the Governor.

The bill requires the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and Supreme Court Justices and certain candidates for those offices to disclose 10 years of tax returns.

Norma Tomlinson, Ms.

Self/Deputy Voter Registrar

Richardson, TX

As a Deputy Voter Registrar in multiple north Texas counties, I have registered many eligible citizens to vote over the past two years, including high school students or other persons who are registering for the first time, voters who have moved since their last registration, and others at widely attended public events. I have never asked for the registrant's political affiliation, nor do I care to know it. I have received elections department training multiple times. Voter turnout has been disappointing in our State over the years. Democracy works when voters turn out; that is a guiding principle for those of us who seek to have our government remain by and for the people as intended by the founders. Please oppose any and all efforts to suppress the vote, including HB 1026, in this and future legislative sessions!

Wallis parnell

Citizen

Austin, TX

When your born in America or have a Citizenship your qualified to “ Vote” , period. Computers weed out nonVoters. voter suppression by the New GQP trumpist, in Texas Leadership is Voter Fraud. Expand voting , is good for Texas, and good for America. We don’t want to live in a trumpist Dictatorship.

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Closing place to vote, closing places to update IDs, closing opportunities for people to vote, is the voter Fraud, period. Everyone sees this, no clever lying will change that. If you have to cheat to win, your not qualified to serve in office.

Deidra Snider

Self/ Commercial Banking

Odessa, TX

I believe that the election for President was rigged. There is no way that is the Truth

shawn flanagan

self, retired

corpus christi, TX

I wish to support HB1128 and hope the committee votes to approve it. It increases election integrity by getting people who have no purpose other than suppressing voting or illegally influencing voting out of the polling places.

shawn flanagan

self, retired

corpus christi, TX

This bill increase election integrity by improving the qualifications of poll watchers. I recommend the committee pass this bill.

shawn flanagan

self, retired

corpus christi, TX

I do not support this bill. This bill is not needed. The procedures already in place for this situation are adequate. There are many other bills that are much more needed than this bill. I hope the committee does not support this bill.

James Richard

Self

Bastrop, TX

This bill, HB 463, will make elections less transparent. Please vote NO. Thank you.

Barbara Harless

self, retired

Murphy, TX

HB 1128 may have good intentions but it fails to strengthen election integrity. All proposed persons specified in HB 1128 as being allowed into a polling place, central counting station, and ballot board are ALREADY stated in statute. HB 1128 lengthens the Election Code without merit. As a member of the Joshua Council Texas Election Watcher Coalition, I will point out just a few

of these redundancies:

Sec. 33.053. HOURS OF SERVICE AT EARLY VOTING POLLING PLACE. A watcher serving at an early voting polling place may be present at the polling place at any time it is open and until completion of the securing of any voting equipment used at the polling place that is required to be secured on the close of voting each day.

(KEY to note: “anytime it is open”)

Sec. 33.054. HOURS OF SERVICE AT EARLY VOTING BALLOT BOARD MEETING. (a) A watcher serving at the meeting place of an early voting ballot board may be present at any time the board is processing or counting ballots and until the board completes its duties.

KEY to note: “any time the board is processing or counting ballots”)

Sec. 33.055. HOURS OF SERVICE AT CENTRAL COUNTING STATION. (a) A watcher serving at a central counting station may be present at any time the station is open for the purpose of processing or preparing to process election results and until the election officers complete their duties at the station.

(KEY to note: “may be present ...purpose of processing OR preparing to process”)

CHAPTER 127. establishes the Central Counting Station, and a plan, listing all the individuals authorized in the CCS. Again, HB 1128 is redundant.

Please do not pass HB 1128.

Thelma Witte

Republican Women of Yoakum Area

Yoakum, TX

We Texans demand transparency in fair & honest elections. Without transparency, elections are subject to fraud & dishonesty. If we are asked to cast our vote, we have the right to know our votes are counted fairly & accurately. Please do not pass HB 463!

Veronica Bowler

Self

League City, TX

Expand voting access

Jennifer Lane

self

Denton, TX

DPDS' voter identity card is very difficult to get and rarely needed, but if it is to help the people who do need it, it needs to be made easier to obtain. As a deputy volunteer voter registrar, I have seen very few instances of individuals who needed one instead of a driver's license or a state ID card, but the individuals who do need it were low- income, younger or very old voters. To give an example of the obstacles involved: one had moved from another state, was wheelchair-bound, and her parents was attempting to obtain and send her a copy of her birth certificate. She then had the obstacle of getting to the DPDS. I went to DPDS for this individual to try to learn more and the supervisor there was inordinately hostile to me because the issue I was bringing was a voting issue. I was surprised by how much so. There needs to be a clear pathway for an individual who registers to vote to be able to obtain the appropriate ID within maximum 30 days. The 30% no show rate is also disturbing. I wonder if that couldn't also have an online means of address similar to how the waiting list for vaccines is being handled.

Sherry Workman

Hill Country Republican Women

Spicewood, TX

I urge you to vote against HB 463. We want to have laws that are enforced or will be enforced that are protective of the rights of the voters in Texas from those who do not follow the law and get away with it. I do not think this Bill meets that criteria.

Jennifer Lane

self

Denton, TX

The number of ballot boxes available needs to be linked to population and geography, not "one per county." As Rep. Beckley pointed out, some Texas counties are sparsely populated and others are more populous than some states. One box for 4 million people is voter suppression and is outrageous. One box that requires driving great distances is also voter suppression and is outrageous. I was glad to see that 87% of voters voted early and that voting was therefore kept as safe as reasonably possible during a pandemic. Longer early voting period also helped generate greater public interest in the election, which is always good.

Anne Markwell

Self, retired

Dallas, TX

I oppose HB 463, Relating to ineligibility to serve as a poll watcher, because it prevents vote counting transparency at the polls and at the central counting stations. If an individual has the right to vote, their ability to detect vote counting fraud should not be infringed or obstructed. As part of the Joshua Council Texas Election Watcher Coalition with years of experience serving to ensure voting integrity, I understand that we need maximum transparency when it comes to counting the vote.

The unintended consequence of this election bill is that it will reduce transparency of how votes are counted. We need MORE TRANSPARENCY of how votes are counted, not less. Thank you.
